

# HUD's

## HOMELESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS



### A Place at the Table: Homeless Veterans and Local Homeless Assistance Planning Networks

Revised December 2005



Office of Community Planning and Development





## Acknowledgements

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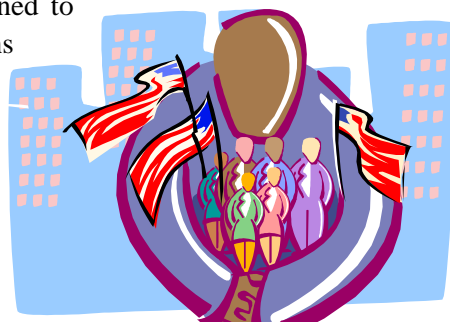
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# Introduction

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This revised and updated guidebook is designed to help organizations serving homeless veterans participate in homeless assistance program planning networks in their communities and access the resources that are available through these networks. The guidebook was originally developed in 2002.<sup>1</sup> Like the original, this new edition is intended to be most useful for veterans service provider organizations that are looking to partner with other homeless assistance providers or build capacity in a number of different areas. This new edition has additional material to address HUD's current priorities for homeless assistance, including serving people who are chronically homeless, developing permanent housing options for veterans, enhancing access to mainstream services, and encouraging collaboration among veterans service providers and other homeless assistance providers.



Veterans make up a significant portion of the country's homeless population. Recent studies estimate that veterans comprise approximately 23 percent of all homeless adults in the United States, and 33 percent of homeless men.<sup>2</sup> While communities across the country have developed projects that are specifically designed for veterans, many veterans' advocates contend that the needs of homeless veterans do not receive sufficient recognition as communities establish priorities for their homeless assistance funds.

Over the past decade, local communities have placed increased emphasis on establishing ongoing coordinated planning efforts to identify the needs of homeless persons within their jurisdiction, inventory the resources available, and identify additional resources to fill gaps in local service networks. In part, these efforts have been driven by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) requirement that groups interested in obtaining competitive homeless assistance grants from HUD must participate in a

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<sup>1</sup> The original guidebook was developed as a companion to a second HUD publication, *Coordinating Resources and Developing Strategies to Meet the Needs of Homeless Veterans*, available on the web at [www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/about/hudvet/pdf/rescoordguide.pdf](http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/about/hudvet/pdf/rescoordguide.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> "Homelessness: Programs and the People They Serve, Findings of the National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers and Clients, Technical Report," Martha R. Burt, et. al., September 1999, Chapter 11. This study, prepared for the Interagency Council on the Homeless, is based on the 1996 National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers and Clients.

coordinated homeless assistance program planning process known as the ***Continuum of Care (CoC)***. More broadly, local providers find that coordinated planning results in more efficient use of resources and better services for their clients.

HUD has encouraged communities to make sure the Continuum of Care process is inclusive, but homeless veterans' organizations have not always been successful in gaining access to the planning process in their communities and competing effectively for funding.

This guide describes how local planning for homeless assistance activities works and highlights ways that organizations that serve homeless veterans can become involved in homeless assistance program planning. The information presented comes primarily from discussions with representatives of organizations serving homeless veterans and the lead agencies of the Continuums of Care in their communities. The homeless veterans' organizations that were contacted include those that only serve veterans as well as agencies that serve veterans along with other subgroups of the homeless population. A total of 45 organizations were consulted, identified primarily by HUD staff and other experts on homelessness and veterans' issues.

The guide is organized as follows:

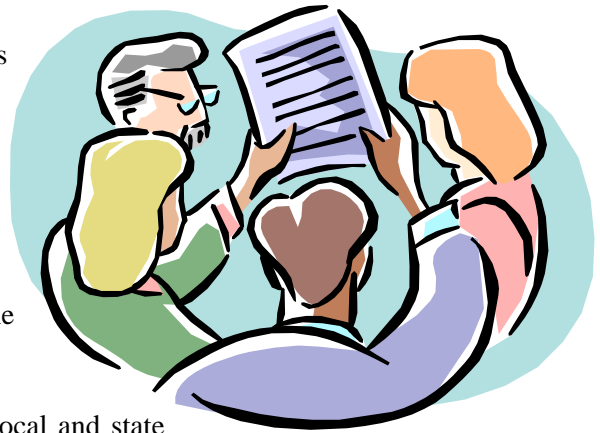
- ***Chapter 1*** provides an overview of how coordinated homeless assistance planning occurs in many communities. The steps that an organization can take to get involved in the planning process are also discussed.
- ***Chapter 2*** highlights successful strategies that organizations serving homeless veterans have developed to participate in homeless assistance planning networks, raise awareness of the needs of homeless veterans, and secure resources for projects serving veterans.
- Finally, ***Chapter 3*** presents profiles of promising partnerships that several veterans' organizations have developed in their communities through participation in coordinated homeless assistance planning initiatives. The profiles emphasize the fact that getting involved in local homeless assistance planning network takes time, but offers substantial long-term benefits to homeless veterans and the organizations that serve them.
- ***Appendix I*** suggests additional resources for building capacity in new or growing organizations. ***Appendix II*** contains additional references for information on mainstream resources. ***Appendix III*** provides contact information for the veterans service providers and other homeless assistance providers who provided information for this guidebook, and ***Appendix IV*** provides contact information for local HUD offices.



## Chapter 1

# Overview of Coordinated Homeless Assistance Program Planning

Planning for the needs of homeless persons and obtaining resources to address those needs is driven by two planning efforts that HUD requires communities to undertake in order to receive federal housing and community development funds. These planning processes are known as the *Consolidated Plan* and the *Continuum of Care*.



Through the *Consolidated Plan*, eligible local and state jurisdictions develop housing and community development priorities, including priorities for addressing homelessness. The Consolidated Plan, which must be

A **Consolidated Plan** provides the framework for states and localities to identify housing, homeless, community and economic development needs and resources, and to develop a strategic plan to meet those needs.

approved by HUD, includes a three to five year strategy for implementing the following formula-funded grant programs: the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG), the HOME Program, Housing for People With AIDS (HOPWA), and the Emergency Shelter Grants Program (ESG).

Of these four programs, only the *Emergency Shelter Grants Program (ESG)* exclusively funds projects for homeless persons. ESG program funds are distributed

to eligible local and state jurisdictions according to a formula that takes into account the population of the jurisdiction and the level of community need, among other factors. To receive ESG funds, jurisdictions must have an approved Consolidated Plan that includes an assessment of the needs of homeless persons and plans for using ESG funds.

Each year, a set proportion (historically 15 percent) of the total HUD McKinney-Vento homeless appropriation is allocated for the ESG program. In fiscal year 2003, this was approximately \$160 million. The majority of HUD's homeless assistance funds (\$1.114 billion in fiscal year 2003) are allocated competitively through the *Continuum of Care (CoC)* planning process. Since 1994, HUD has required that communities seeking competitive HUD grants under three programs – *Supportive Housing*, *Shelter Plus Care*, and *Section 8 Moderate*



## Exhibit 1

### HUD's Major Homeless Assistance Programs

#### ***The Supportive Housing Program (SHP)***

Supportive Housing Program grants may be used to fund one or more of the following activities: acquisition or rehabilitation of a building to be used as supportive housing or to provide supportive services; new construction of a supportive housing facility; leasing a building to be used for supportive housing or services; the provision of new or increased supportive services; costs associated with the day-to-day operation of a new supportive housing project or the expanded portion of an existing project; and administrative costs. SHP funds may also be used to implement and operate Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS).

#### ***Shelter Plus Care Program (S+C)***

Shelter Plus Care Program grants may be used for the provision of rental assistance payments that, when combined with social services, provides supportive housing for homeless people with disabilities and their families. Shelter Plus Care provides funds for four types of rental assistance: (1) Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (contracted directly with the low-income tenant); (2) Project-Based Rental Assistance (contracted with a building owner); (3) Sponsor-Based Rental Assistance (contracted with a nonprofit organization); and (4) SRO-based Rental Assistance (Single-room occupancy contracted with a public housing authority.)

#### ***Single Room Occupancy Program (SRO)***

The Single Room Occupancy Program provides tenant-based rental assistance for moderate rehabilitation of buildings with single-room dwellings, designed for the use of an individual, that often do not contain food preparation or sanitary facilities. A public housing authority makes Section 8 rental assistance payments to the landlords on behalf of homeless individuals who rent the rehabilitated units. Rental assistance for SRO units is provided for a period of 10 years, and includes some of the rehabilitation as well as the other costs of owning and maintaining the property.

#### ***Emergency Shelter Grants Program (ESG)***

The Emergency Shelter Grants Program may be used to fund one or more of the following activities: the renovation/rehabilitation/conversion of buildings for use as emergency shelters; shelter operating expenses such as rent, repairs, security, fuel, equipment, insurance, utilities, food and furnishings; essential services such as those concerned with employment, health, and education of program participants; activities designed to prevent the incidence of homelessness; and administrative costs. ESG provides funds to states, territories, and qualified cities and counties.

***Rehabilitation for Single Room Occupancy*** – use the Continuum of Care planning process to develop a strategic, coordinated approach to planning for projects that assist individuals and families who are homeless. (Exhibit 1 provides brief descriptions of each of these programs.)

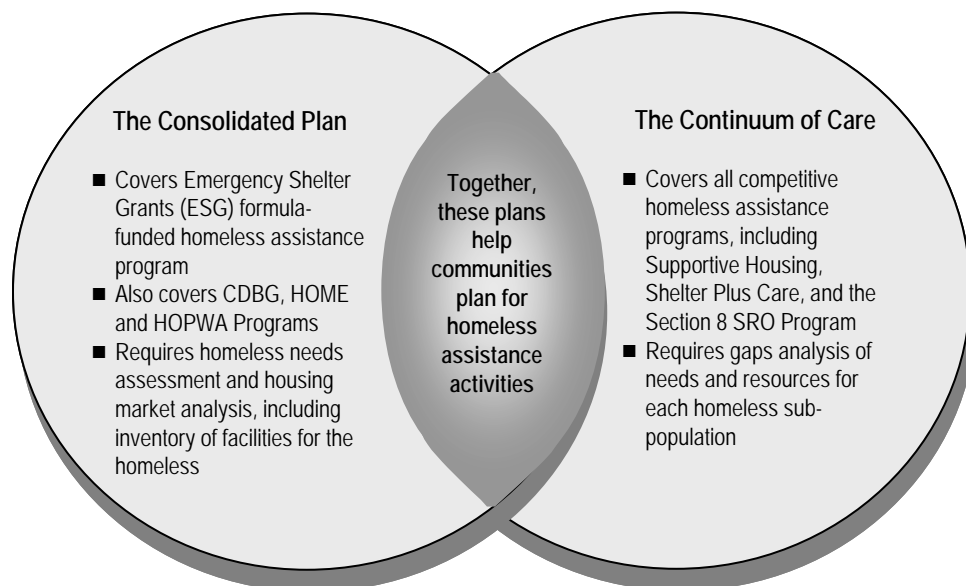
The Continuum of Care process was designed to promote the development of comprehensive systems to address the range of needs of different homeless populations in a community. In order to receive HUD funds, state and local governments annually submit a Continuum of Care Plan that demonstrates broad community participation and identifies resources and gaps in the community's approach to providing outreach, emergency shelter, and transitional and permanent housing, as well as related services for homeless people. The plan also establishes local funding priorities.

A **Continuum of Care Plan** is a community plan to organize and deliver housing and services to meet the specific needs of people who are homeless as they move to stable housing and maximum self-sufficiency. It includes action steps to end homelessness and prevent a return to homelessness.

As illustrated in Exhibit 2, the Consolidated Plan and the Continuum of Care planning process together help communities plan for homeless assistance activities, apply for federal funds, and involve a range of local agencies and stakeholders in local priority setting. Every project proposed in the Continuum of Care Plan must obtain a certificate of consistency with the Consolidated Plan from the participating jurisdiction. Both the Continuum of Care Plan and the Consolidated Plan use the same gaps analysis chart to assess

## Exhibit 2

### HUD's Community Planning Framework: The Consolidated Plan and the Continuum of Care Planning Process



the needs of local homeless subpopulations, including veterans, and evaluate the jurisdiction's capacity to meet those needs (the gaps analysis is discussed further below). Since the Continuum of Care process focuses exclusively on the needs of homeless persons, the next section of this guide describes in greater detail how it is implemented.

## An Overview of Continuum of Care Planning

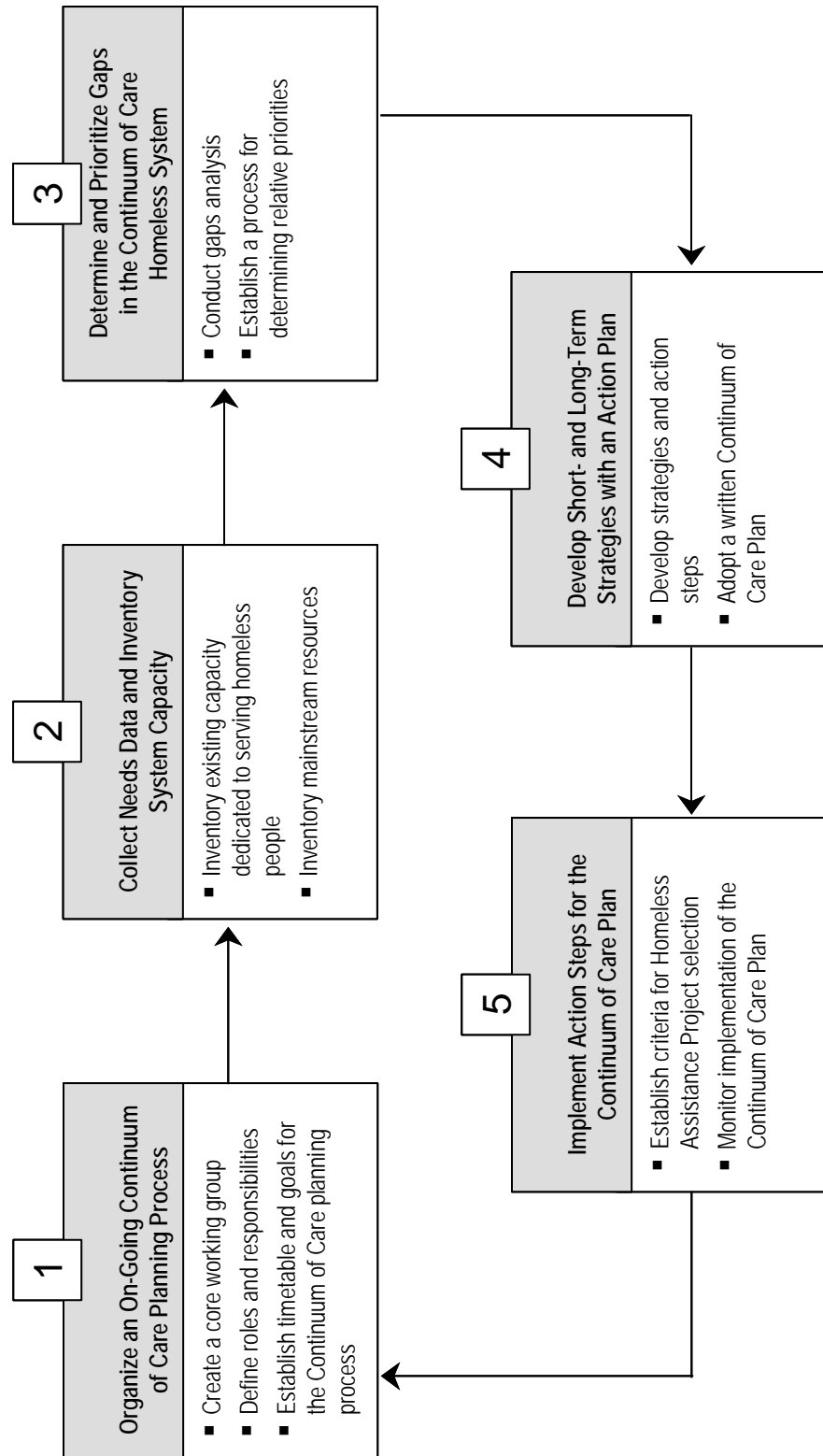
The Continuum of Care process is not solely a mechanism by which homeless assistance providers apply for funding. The Continuum of Care process also serves as a year-round planning and networking tool for providers. The regularly scheduled meetings present an opportunity to meet staff from other agencies and organizations serving homeless persons. Many homeless assistance providers use these sessions to obtain formal and informal referrals for clients and as a vehicle for identifying potential partners for new homeless assistance projects.

Shown in Exhibit 3, the Continuum of Care planning cycle involves five key steps:

- **Organizing the annual planning process**, which includes establishing a “core working group” that has overall responsibility for developing and implementing the plan;
- **Collecting data** on the needs of homeless persons in the community and assessing local capacity to address those needs;
- **Determining and prioritizing gaps** in the jurisdiction's homeless assistance system;
- **Developing short- and long-term strategies** and preparing the plan; and
- **Implementing the plan**, including identifying projects for funding and monitoring progress.

The annual Continuum of Care planning process is intended to include all major players in the homeless assistance community and to tie in with existing planning efforts, including the Consolidated Plan. At the start of the process, the community identifies a “core working group” to lead the process, then sets goals for the coming year and establishes committees to undertake specific activities in developing the Continuum of Care plan. As part of the planning process, communities must identify organizations to represent the needs of each subpopulation and must describe those organizations' level of participation in the process. Veterans are one of the subpopulations specifically identified in the application.

## Exhibit 3 Continuum of Care Planning Cycle





Applicants are informed that high scores may be established by a broad-based planning process that includes veterans as one of the key homeless groups.

Another key homeless group is people who meet HUD's definition of *chronically homeless*. A person experiencing chronic homelessness is defined as an unaccompanied individual with a disabling condition who has been continuously homeless for a year or more or has experienced four or more episodes of homelessness over the last three years. The chronically homeless only make up about 10 percent of all homeless persons but use an estimated 50 percent of homeless assistance services. While there is not much data on the subject, recent studies suggest that as many as one-third of homeless veterans are chronically homeless.<sup>3</sup> HUD encourages communities to address the specific service needs of this subpopulation by offering higher scores on certain sections of the Continuum of Care application to communities targeting housing resources to their chronically homeless population.

As a next step, Continuum of Care members must assess the needs of the local homeless population and weigh the community's existing capacity to address those needs. This can be a time-consuming task, often involving surveys of providers and of homeless persons. The results of this exercise are used to complete the Continuum of Care Homeless Population and Subpopulation chart (shown in Exhibit 4). The chart serves to document the need of each homeless subpopulation, the current emergency and transitional inventory to address the need, and the remaining unsheltered population. Homeless veterans are specifically identified as a subpopulation that must be documented.

Staff at several of the providers who serve veterans highlighted the challenge in accurately counting the number of homeless veterans within a community. Often, veterans do not identify themselves as such to service providers. Female veterans, in particular, may not see themselves as veterans because they did not participate in active combat, yet their military service qualifies them for veteran status. Within the Continuum of Care, providers serving veterans can somewhat compensate for this by encouraging other homeless assistance providers to ask their clients whether they ever served in the military, rather than whether they are a veteran.

The subpopulation analysis is used to set priorities for funding – including the criteria that will be used to rank and select proposed projects – and develop short- and long-term implementation strategies. This forms the basis for the final Continuum of Care Plan. The projects that are locally selected and submitted to HUD for review must address the priority gaps and unmet needs that were

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<sup>3</sup> 1996 National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers and Clients (1999), Urban Institute, Washington, DC



previously identified. This cycle is conducted annually to reflect the changing composition and needs of the local homeless population.

Communities should always balance their local priorities with HUD's priorities while ensuring that each proposed project addresses an unmet need. Over the past few years, HUD has placed a specific emphasis on developing more permanent housing for persons with disabilities. For example, in 2005, HUD allowed communities to seek the lesser of 15 percent of their pro rata need or \$6 million for permanent housing projects targeted exclusively to chronically homeless people. Up to 20 percent of the bonus can be used for case management costs.

## How to Get Involved

Every local homeless assistance program planning network or Continuum of Care is organized differently and offers a variety of opportunities for participating organizations. Organizations serving homeless veterans need to learn how the network is organized in their community and assess their opportunities for getting involved. Following are some key steps to getting involved, identified by veterans' organizations currently participating in their local Continuum of Care.

Exhibit 4  
Continuum of Care Homeless Population and Subpopulations Chart

Continuum of Care Homeless Population and Subpopulations Chart				
Part 1: Homeless Population	Sheltered		Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional		
<b>Example:</b>	75 (A)	125 (A)	105 (N)	3
1. Homeless Individuals				
2. Homeless Families with Children				
2a. Persons in Homeless Families with Children				
<b>Total (lines 1 + 2a)</b>				
Part 2: Homeless Subpopulations	Sheltered		Optional for Unsheltered	
1. Chronically Homeless				
2. Severely Mentally Ill				
3. Chronic Substance Abuse				
<b>4. Veterans</b>				
5. Persons with HIV/AIDS				
6. Victims of Domestic Violence				
7. Youth (Under 18 years of age)				

### Part 2: Homeless Subpopulations

1. Chronically Homeless
2. Severely Mentally Ill
3. Chronic Substance Abuse
- 4. Veterans**
5. Persons with HIV/AIDS
6. Victims of Domestic Violence
7. Youth (Under 18 years of age)





## Start with HUD

Information and assistance on local or regional Continuums of Care can be obtained by contacting your local HUD office. Organizations should find out where the Continuum of Care networks are in their area and identify the lead agencies. Appendix IV provides contact information for local HUD offices. Within each office, the Director of the Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD), which oversees the implementation of HUD's homeless programs, is a good starting point.

Another good source of information on Continuum of Care resources is the HUDVet Directory produced by the HUD Veteran Resource Center. You can reach the center by e-mailing [hudvet@hud.gov](mailto:hudvet@hud.gov) or contacting [www.hud.gov/hudvet/vetmain.html](http://www.hud.gov/hudvet/vetmain.html).

For general information about the Continuum of Care, check HUD's web site, which includes:

- Instructions for applying for funding and current Notices of Funding Availability (NOFAs) and application requirements.  
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/adm/grants/fundsavail.cfm>
- The *Guide to Continuum of Care Planning and Implementation*, which provides detailed, step-by-step advice on how to organize and implement a Continuum of Care plan.  
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/library/coc/cocguide/index.cfm>
- HUD's *Continuums of Care for States* brochure, which includes specific information on how to form a statewide Continuum and highlights approaches to addressing the needs of non-metropolitan areas.  
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/library/coc/cocstates.pdf>
- A description of HUD's homeless assistance programs and the Continuum of Care, including links to past Continuum of Care trainings and resources.  
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/programs/index.cfm>





### Contact the Agency that Leads the Local Continuum of Care Planning Process

Find out when local network meetings are held and attend them. These meetings are usually held monthly or every other month. Beginning with consistent participation at these scheduled meetings, organizations can become familiar with the local process and the basics of homeless assistance planning. Over time, the level of involvement generally increases as organizations learn more about the process and the players.



### Become an Active Participant in the Continuum of Care and CHALENG Networks

Join a Continuum of Care committee, work on data collection for the needs assessment, or become a member of the core working group. These activities allow for greater input in the process and offer additional opportunities to make sure that the needs of homeless veterans are included in the community's homeless assistance strategy.

### Community Homelessness Assessment Local Education Networking Groups (CHALENG)

There are other local networks worth exploring as well. For example, many communities have a ***Community Homelessness Assessment Local Education Networking for Veterans Group (CHALENG)***. CHALENG networks are affiliated with local Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers and provide the VA with data on homelessness and analyses of gaps in services for homeless veterans in their area.

Federal legislation requires the VA to assess the needs of homeless veterans and develop action plans to meet those needs. Project CHALENG encourages service coordination by bringing the VA together with community agencies and other federal, state, and local government agencies who provide services to the homeless to raise awareness of homeless veterans' needs and to plan to meet those needs. All local homeless assistance providers and others who have an interest in homeless services are invited to the CHALENG meetings. Due to this broad participation, the CHALENG meetings can provide an important opportunity for providers and concerned community members to network, identify needs, and pool resources to serve those needs. In several communities contacted for this guide, the lead agency for Continuum of Care planning noted that local Continuum of Care members depend on CHALENG participants to be the experts on veterans' concerns.



Each year the Department of Veterans Affairs publishes a report summarizing the results of annual surveys of both local VA staff and community participants (local government, service providers, formerly and currently homeless veterans). These surveys ask for current perceptions of homeless veterans' needs, the degree of VA/community cooperation and collaboration in serving homeless veterans, and progress on local homeless veterans program initiatives. Points of Contact (POCs) are assigned in each community to coordinate CHALENG activities, set action plans, organize meetings among service providers, and act as a link to the VA. You can find the most recent CHALENG report online, as well as a list of POCs on the VA's website at:

<http://www.va.gov/homeless/page.cfm?pg=17>





## Chapter 2

# Strategies for Ensuring Veterans' Interests are Represented in Local Homeless Assistance Program Planning

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Organizations serving homeless veterans agree that involvement in local provider networks and planning efforts is critical to ensure that the needs of homeless veterans are addressed. They also acknowledge that veterans' organizations sometimes find it difficult to get involved in local networks and to obtain sufficient support for projects serving veterans in the priority-setting process. For example, veterans' organizations may find that local networks need more information about the size of the homeless veteran population as well as the special services that homeless veterans may require. Veterans service providers can also help established planning networks understand better the services that the Department of Veterans Affairs can provide for homeless veterans and those the VA is not able to address. Finally, some homeless veterans' organizations have found that they need to hone their skills in participating effectively in the local planning process and developing funding proposals in order to successfully obtain homeless assistance funds for projects serving veterans.



The organizations interviewed for this guidebook identified several strategies that they found successful in addressing and overcoming these common challenges. The strategies focus on networking, developing partnerships, and becoming a leader in the homeless assistance community. Specifically, the organizations highlighted the following strategies:

- Make local networking a priority;
- Don't go it alone;
- Think strategically about how the project addresses local service gaps; and
- Be a leader in the homeless assistance community.

The remainder of the chapter describes each of these strategies and provides examples of how they have been used by organizations serving homeless veterans. A complete listing of the organizations contacted for this guide can be found in Appendix III.

## Strategy 1: Make Local Networking a Priority

Since the mid-1990s, HUD has encouraged homeless assistance providers to work together to document homelessness in their communities, analyze gaps in homeless assistance services and resources, and develop projects to meet identified needs. In particular, HUD has made coordinated local planning a requirement to obtain program funds, whether through the Consolidated Plan or the Continuum of Care process. More broadly, however, communities are encouraged to use the networks that result from the consolidated planning process, as well as other venues such as the VA's CHALENG groups, as a year-round forum for enhancing communication, improving service delivery, and assessing outcomes.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the first step to getting involved in local planning networks is to find out where the networks are and start attending meetings. Exhibit 5 provides some examples of the kinds of roles that homeless veterans' organizations have played in local planning networks; the roles are drawn from these organizations' experiences with the Continuum of Care process. The examples below illustrate some of the lessons learned from these experiences, as well as the benefits to veterans' organizations of networking with homeless assistance providers and the broader community.



### Ensure a Strong Veterans' Presence at Local Meetings

**Catholic Social Services (CSS) of Lackawanna County**, Pennsylvania, has been quite successful in getting attention focused on the needs of veterans in their region. One strategy that CSS of Lackawanna County has promoted is bringing veterans and current clients to Continuum of Care and other networking meetings. In addition, the local VA hospital sends a representative to every meeting. The presence of the veterans and their advocates at Continuum of Care and other networking meetings has been vital to the promotion of the needs of homeless veterans.

**Veterans' Outreach North (VON)**, in Duluth, Minnesota, has also tried to make networking an organizational priority. It was important to the success of VON to participate in the Continuum of Care and other provider networks year-round, and not just at funding time. Regular presence at these meetings allowed VON's staff to gain credibility within the provider community and to make an impact on



the available resources for veterans. Part of the reason for their success was that VON staff approached these meetings with a strategy that anticipated initial resistance. Being prepared to advocate for their client population at every meeting enhanced VON's credibility with other Continuum of Care members.

#### Exhibit 5

#### Participating in Local Homeless Assistance Program Planning

Participating regularly in homeless assistance program planning networks is a good way to advocate for veterans' needs, share information on services and resources available through homeless veterans' organizations, and learn about other available resources. In fact, many organizations serving veterans believe that the Continuum of Care process is as important as a networking tool as it is a vehicle for funding requests.

Following are some examples of how veteran-focused organizations have become involved in local homeless assistance planning networks:

The Executive Director of ***Operation Dignity*** has participated in the Alameda County, California Continuum of Care since it began. The Executive Director sits on the Executive Committee and is a member of the core working group. This person helps to establish standards of reasonableness of care and conducting outreach efforts to homeless veterans.

***Vietnam Veterans of San Diego*** (VVSD) has been a part of the San Diego City and County Continuum of Care since 1995. VVSD staff members sit on the application committee, help to edit the Continuum's application, and generally speak on behalf of homeless veterans in the community.

***VETSPACE*** of Alachua County, Florida is part of the core working group in that area, and staff participate in sub-committees of the Continuum of Care to prepare the gaps analysis, set priorities, and write the application. The agency's grants manager also sits on the Board of Directors for the Continuum of Care and attends the monthly meetings. Attendance at these meetings offers an opportunity to report on veterans' issues and keep veterans a focus for the group.

The Phoenix office of ***U.S. Vets*** has only been in existence since 2002; however, they have quickly become an active participant in the Maricopa County, Arizona Continuum of Care. The Director of Programs described one of the core values of U.S. Vets as "collaborate in everything and be redundant in nothing." To this



end, he participates in committees and Task Force meetings led by the Continuum to understand what services are already available for veterans and to identify what gaps exist. As a result, U.S. Vets has been able to tailor its programs by drawing on existing resources and using HUD funds to address the unmet needs of homeless veterans in the county.



### Get Involved in CHALENG Networks

Many veterans service organizations are already involved in CHALENG networks in their communities. The ***California Council of Veterans Affairs***, a veterans service organization in Los Angeles, CA, has been actively involved in their CHALENG network for several years. Through annual luncheon meetings and regular communication by email and a quarterly newsletter, the VA shares information about upcoming funding opportunities, agency networking opportunities, and VA program changes. While the Council said that the Continuum of Care does not consistently place a priority on veterans' interests and needs, their participation in the local CHALENG network has presented numerous successful partnership opportunities and ways to better serve their veterans.

The ***Commission on Economic Opportunity (CEO)***, a veterans service provider in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania got involved in their local CHALENG network through their VA homeless outreach representative. Although CEO staff already interacted frequently with the VA because they are located on the VA campus, getting involved in the CHALENG network has presented unique partnership opportunities that might not have happened otherwise. Currently, the Commission on Economic Opportunity is working to integrate their local Continuum of Care and the CHALENG network. Staff hope that the networking success CEO has had with CHALENG will extend to other organizations working in the CoC as well.

In Missouri, the CHALENG network includes 24 counties, federal, state, and local agencies, as well as CoCs. The ***Boone County VA Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV)*** coordinator is a member of the Governor's Taskforce to End Homelessness and a member of the CoC subcommittee that evaluates and submits the annual SuperNOFA applications for Missouri's Balance of State Continuum. She is also responsible for organizing annual meetings that feature a "supermarket of benefits" where providers set up tables and social workers help homeless veterans learn about available programs. While the representatives, social workers, and homeless veterans participate in the benefits fair, they also complete the annual CHALENG survey, which is used to assess the unmet needs of homeless veterans in the state.





## Make Networking Part of the Organization's Mission, Supported by Organizational Resources

The Executive Director of the *Commission on Economic Opportunity* in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania noted the importance of providing staff members with adequate time for networking and attending meetings. Although each individual must take the initiative to attend community networking and monthly Continuum of Care meetings, it is just as important for management staff to support and allow for the time necessary to pursue these networking opportunities.

The *Opportunity Center for the Homeless* in El Paso, TX operates 10 HUD-funded programs, including a specialized transitional housing program and a resource center that serves 60 to 70 veterans at any one time. The organization participates actively in the Continuum of Care and is also actively involved in the CHALENG network. A liaison at the VA helps “bring the VA to us,” according to the Opportunity Center’s director. In return, the Opportunity Center’s street outreach workers help connect homeless veterans who are on the street to the VA’s services.

## Strategy 2: Don’t Go it Alone

One of the most important benefits of getting involved in local homeless assistance program planning networks is the opportunity to collaborate with other agencies providing similar or complementary services. Partnering with local agencies benefits organizations serving homeless veterans in a number of ways. For example, an organization serving a general homeless population may partner with a homeless veterans’ organization to develop a collaborative project targeted to veterans or to institute set-asides for veterans within larger homeless assistance projects.

Organizations also frequently use partnerships to expand the range of services offered to their clients, or to enhance their own organizational capacity. This last function may be particularly important for homeless veterans’ organizations that have limited prior experience with housing or supportive services, or that do not have the in-house technical expertise to produce a competitive grant application. Finally, partnering with a local agency – particularly one already involved in the local planning network or with a well-established reputation – can help to broaden support in the local provider community for specific projects, such as those targeted to homeless veterans.

The following examples highlight the two types of partnerships that organizations serving homeless veterans have found particularly beneficial, as





well as some of the ways in which these partnerships have been used. Further examples of how organizations serving homeless veterans have built successful partnerships and inter-agency collaborations are presented in Exhibit 6.

## Exhibit 6

### Further Examples of Successful Partnerships and Collaboration

- **Joseph House** in Cincinnati was able to partner with **Goodwill Industries** to provide employment training to its supportive housing residents. Joseph House was also able to partner with other housing providers to locate permanent housing options for veterans graduating from its transitional housing programs.
- **VCAP** of Grand Rapids, Michigan has been successful at getting units or beds set aside for homeless veterans in the Grand Rapids area. VCAP has agreements with various community organizations to provide housing for veterans – a total of about 150 slots through a nonprofit housing development/management firm and the local housing authority. VCAP has been working with a nonprofit housing developer to develop a project proposal for HUD funding.
- The **Butler County VA** in Pennsylvania partnered with the local Housing Authority to apply for HUD grants to establish the first transitional housing project in that county. Three of the ten units in the transitional housing project will be set aside for veterans who will also have access to case management services provided by the VA.
- The **American GI Forum National Veterans Outreach Program (NVOP)**, a veterans' organization with a 30-year history of serving the needs of homeless veterans in San Antonio, has found that partnering with other homeless providers in the San Antonio area to apply for HUD funds has formalized and strengthened existing relationships among providers. NVOP's partners include **Goodwill Industries**, **the Salvation Army**, **the United Way**, and the VA hospital. In addition, the Forum is working with a local Air Force base as it downsizes to identify ways to reserve space for housing and services for homeless veterans.





## Take Advantage of Partnership Opportunities with the VA and Local Veterans' Organizations

In addition to collaborating with the VA on specific projects, organizations serving homeless veterans can benefit by serving as a link between the VA and the local homeless assistance program planning network. ***Vietnam Veterans of San Diego*** (VVSD) has effectively taken on this role, offering to connect veterans in other homeless assistance programs within the Continuum of Care to the VA for additional services and funding. The VVSD staff believes that its ability to bring additional resources and funding sources to the Continuum helps it gain the respect and support of other homeless assistance providers.

***Catholic Social Services of Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania***, has used its relationship with the VA and participation in the local CHALENG group to strengthen its funding applications. For example, CSS submits letters of support from the CHALENG group and the VA with its applications.

Similarly, in ***Pierce County, Washington***, which estimates the number of chronically homeless veterans to be 19 percent of the total homeless population, several organizations serving homeless veterans are active participants in the local Continuum of Care run by the County's Department of Community Services and Resource Development. Both the Department of Veterans Affairs and the state Bureau of Veterans' Affairs have representatives that sit on the Continuum of Care and participate actively in the CoC's planning process to make sure that veterans' needs are adequately addressed. The CoC representative from the Bureau of Veterans' Affairs emphasizes the need for groups serving homeless veterans to share information regarding resources for homeless veterans because 'no one agency has pockets deep enough to take care of all the homeless veterans in the community.'



## Forge Partnerships with Other Homeless Assistance Providers and Community-Based Organizations

***Vietnam Veterans of San Diego*** (VVSD) has collaborated with two other housing and service providers in the San Diego area to provide supportive housing that includes veterans. In partnership with Interfaith Community Services, VVSD developed a 44-unit transitional housing project with 33 units set aside for veterans. In a second project, VVSD provides case management services to 30 veterans living in transitional housing run by St. Vincent de Paul. VVSD believes that without involvement in the local homeless assistance network, these projects would have never been created. In addition, both of these projects receive additional funding from the Department of Veterans Affairs, which makes a veteran-inclusive project more appealing to housing providers who might not otherwise target their programs to veterans.



***The RISE Project***, located in Alameda County, California, is a six agency collaborative providing supportive services to disabled homeless people, including veterans. The project began as an effort to address a gap in services for homeless individuals with disabilities in the southern part of the county, a suburban area that is historically underserved. The project was initiated by the Alameda County Housing and Community Development Office, which provides many RISE clients with rental assistance through the county's Shelter Plus Care grants. The other partner agencies, which include mental health providers, substance abuse treatment centers, and life skills training programs, offer a full range of coordinated services. Although none of the participating agencies serve veterans exclusively, staff maintain a focus on changing needs in the Veterans population. RISE is planning for services for the newest Veteran groups and renewing cooperative relationships with the Department of Veterans Affairs and other veteran specific service agencies.

In Seattle, the ***Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program***, a small veterans' service organization with limited staff and resources, sought out a partnership with the ***Compass Center***, a well-established supportive housing provider in the community, to run a much needed transitional housing program for veterans. Together, VVLP and the Compass Center initiated two veteran-specific transitional housing projects, serving approximately 30 to 35 veterans a year. The two groups recognized that there was a need for projects targeted to veterans and collaborated to address this gap. Outreach workers from the ***Healthcare for Homeless Veterans*** program have been an asset in identifying and referring veterans to these projects.



#### Link Veterans to Permanent Housing and Mainstream Services

Many organizations serving homeless veterans run transitional housing and services programs, with the goal of moving veterans on to permanent housing and mainstream services. But making the link from transitional to permanent housing and services can be challenging. Partnerships with other agencies are critical to successful transitions.

In Ogden, UT, the ***Homeless Veterans Fellowship*** (HVF) uses both formal and informal agreements with permanent housing providers in the Ogden area as vehicles to move graduates of transitional housing into permanent housing. The organization has a Memorandum of Agreement with the city housing authority, which has agreed to move successful Homeless Veterans Fellowship graduates to the top of the Housing Choice Voucher waiting list. The Homeless Veterans Fellowship also has several informal agreements with local low-income housing developers like the Kier Corporation, which also acts as the landlord to graduating veterans. Residents of Kier Corporation's low-income housing pay 30 percent of their income in rent. The Homeless Veterans Fellowship also has



forged relationships with individual landlords who manage market rate rental units and agree to give priority to graduates of HVP transitional housing.

Another of HUD's priorities is to encourage homeless assistance providers to help clients access mainstream resources like SSI, TANF, or Food Stamps. It is critical that Continuum of Care members describe how their system helps clients identify the mainstream resources for which they are eligible, enroll the clients in these resources, and ensure that the clients are receiving the benefits. Case managers, the Director, and the Assistant Director of the *Homeless Veterans Fellowship* in Ogden, Utah are directly involved in completing applications and ensuring clients get the benefits for which they qualify. Since many of the veterans are not able to work due to disability, these benefits are essential in helping clients become financially self-sufficient. Caseworkers at *Vietnam Veterans of San Diego* also help clients obtain SSI and other benefits by assisting in opening a claim and filling out the necessary paperwork. The caseworkers also maintain daily contact with the local VA office to ensure their clients are getting the benefits they deserve.

To learn more about identifying, accessing, and enrolling homeless veterans in mainstream resources, turn to Appendix II at the end of this guide. There, you'll find a list of helpful resources and links on these topics and many others.

### Strategy 3: Think Strategically About How The Project Addresses Local Housing and Supportive Service Gaps

In order to improve their chances of obtaining limited federal funds, organizations serving homeless veterans have found that they have to think strategically about how their projects address the housing and supportive service gaps identified by the local homeless assistance program planning process. Organizations need to develop a firm sense of where the needs of homeless veterans fit into the local gaps analysis, as well as what kinds of housing and services are likely to receive funding priority. Armed with this information, organizations can tailor their projects to meet the broader goals of the homeless assistance community, while also furthering their own goals of serving homeless veterans.

The following examples highlight the specific strategies that organizations serving homeless veterans have found useful in marketing specific projects, and the needs of homeless veterans in general, to their local homeless assistance program planning networks.





## Tailor Project Proposals to Respond to Identified Needs and Funding Priorities

While many agencies serving homeless veterans choose to offer transitional housing to best address veterans' needs, there are many organizations that have made the jump to permanent housing. The focus on providing permanent housing and supportive services for disabled homeless veterans is consistent with Federal priorities *and* fills a substantial local service gap.

The **Montachusett Veterans Opportunity Council (VOC)** responded to the need for additional permanent housing for veterans by adding two permanent housing projects specifically for homeless veterans. The VOC also operates transitional housing for homeless veterans and is planning to add another 12 units in the near future. The **Albany Housing Coalition** in Albany, NY sought Shelter Plus Care funding to address a growing homeless veteran population in their area. Finally, **Positive Health Care** in Newark, NJ provides permanent housing to homeless HIV/AIDS veterans through funding from HUD's Supportive Housing Program.

Emphasis on Permanent Housing... Congressional restrictions on the use of homeless assistance funds make it increasingly difficult for new projects that are not permanent housing projects to obtain HUD funds. In fiscal year 2004, Congress required that a minimum of 30 percent of HUD's homeless grant funds (excluding Shelter Plus Care renewals) be used for permanent housing for homeless persons.

In Bellingham, Washington, a lack of permanent supportive housing for veterans with mental health and substance abuse needs prompted the **Bellingham Veterans Center** to approach the local housing authority to apply for a Shelter Plus Care grant to provide housing and supportive services to eligible veterans. Each agency brings its own services to this joint venture. The housing assistance is administered through the housing authority while the Bellingham Veterans Center provides counseling and a weekly support group for the 12 program participants.

Through its active participation in the Maricopa County (AZ) Continuum of Care, the Phoenix office of **U.S. Vets** learned of the availability of permanent housing funds for new programs and secured HUD funding for its **Victory Place** program, a permanent housing program for disabled homeless veterans. U.S. Vets then used their HUD funding to leverage additional government and private funding to expand its permanent housing program. The Director of Programs estimates that the organization has doubled the funding it initially received from HUD.







## Frame the Needs of Homeless Veterans within the Context of Addressing the Needs of the Entire Homeless Population

Sometimes homeless veterans' organizations find it difficult to gain entrance to local homeless assistance planning networks because they are assertive in advocating on behalf of veterans. Well-intentioned advocacy can convey a sense of veterans' entitlement that may not be well received by other homeless assistance providers, especially if the providers believe (mistakenly) that all veterans have access to a full range of services through the VA. Staff of ***Vietnam Veterans of San Diego*** have found that working successfully with other homeless assistance providers requires a balance between assertive advocacy and collaboration. In homeless assistance program planning, this often means framing the needs of homeless veterans within the context of addressing the needs of the homeless population as a whole.

The ***American GI Forum National Veterans Outreach Program (NVOP)***, located in San Antonio, Texas, has used this strategy to generate broad support for its projects serving homeless veterans. In competing for HUD funds through the Continuum of Care process, NVOP tailors its project proposals to directly address the service gaps identified in the needs assessment for the total population of homeless individuals. NVOP staff report that focusing on service delivery is more effective than focusing on the target population. As a result, NVOP's proposals focus primarily on the organization's ability to provide the needed services and secondarily on the project's target population of homeless veterans. By responding to the needs assessment conducted as a part of the comprehensive homeless planning process and developing projects that address those needs directly, the agency has gained respect within the community as a capable homeless assistance provider.



## Know Your Numbers

Although organizations serving homeless veterans may choose to tailor their projects to the broad service needs and funding priorities of the local homeless assistance program planning network, it is essential that they come to the table with sound knowledge and credible statistics on the number of veterans who are homeless and their service needs.

Local homeless assistance providers use a variety of methods to develop accurate estimates of the prevalence of veterans in the local homeless population. Some of these activities are tied to preparing funding applications while others are part of ongoing efforts to monitor homelessness in the community.



Telephone or written surveys completed by service providers, focus groups with homeless individuals, and point-in-time censuses of people on the street or in emergency shelters are common methods of “knowing your numbers” and identifying needs. One representative of a veterans’ multi-service center noted that simply making sure that all homeless assistance providers collect information about military service on their intake forms can provide important ongoing documentation to support estimates of the number of homeless veterans in the community. Taking advantage of the CHALENG networks’ efforts to document the needs of homeless veterans (described earlier) is another way. The following examples illustrate some other methods.

Documenting the Numbers and Needs of Homeless Veterans...

- Conduct point-in-time censuses
- Survey local homeless assistance providers
- Conduct focus groups with current and former clients
- Create a category for “military service” on client intake forms

- ***The Housing and Community Development Department of Alameda County (CA)***, the lead agency for homeless assistance program planning in Alameda County, surveys clients in HUD-funded projects to identify the size of various subpopulations, including the number of homeless veterans.
- As part of estimating the population of homeless veterans in Alameda county, staff from veterans’ service provider ***Operation Dignity*** have worked to change the wording of the local Continuum’s definition of veterans to include female veterans and persons who have served in the armed forces but have not seen active duty – two groups that are often not counted as part of the veteran population.
- ***Joseph House*** in Cincinnati, Ohio, has capitalized on the opportunity presented by their Continuum’s annual consumer focus group meeting by regularly bringing several of their homeless veteran clients to participate in the discussion. The needs of homeless veterans are addressed in the gaps analysis produced from the results of these meetings.

## Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS)

HUD is promoting the development of local ***Homeless Management Information Systems*** (HMIS) in Continuums of Care. An HMIS is a computerized data collection application designed to capture client-level information over time on the characteristics and service needs of homeless persons. HMIS is being used increasingly by communities across the country to improve the delivery of service to homeless persons and to obtain better information about their needs. Once an HMIS has been implemented for several years, longitudinal HMIS data can be used to:

- calculate the size of the homeless population accurately;
- identify changing service needs and service gaps;
- address barriers to accessing services; and
- develop critical outcome measures to assess program effectiveness at the program, community, and national level.

HMIS is a vast improvement over traditional methods of counting and describing homeless persons (i.e., point-in-time census counts). For example, point-in-time counts tend to over-represent homeless persons with the most chronic problems while under-representing those facing time-limited situational crises, and are vulnerable to seasonal fluctuations in homeless service use.

HUD has required all CoC's to make substantial progress in implementing HMIS by October 2004. As part of this implementation, CoCs and local homeless assistance providers that receive HUD McKinney-Vento funds are required to implement national data standards. The standards require providers to obtain basic information about clients, including demographic information, residential history, service usage, and veteran status.

With the full implementation of HMIS, veterans service providers and organizations involved in CHALENG networks may one day be able to share data across providers and follow the progress of homeless clients through housing and service organizations. Providers will then be able to better assess local needs and target resources for homeless veterans depending on patterns of service use.

HUD published the HMIS Data and Technical Standards on July 30, 2004. You can find this Notice, guidance, and more information on HMIS on HUD's website at <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/hmis/index.cfm>.



## Strategy 4: Be a Leader in the Homeless Assistance Community

Beyond making local networking a priority, developing community partnerships, and thinking strategically about addressing local service gaps, some organizations serving homeless veterans have benefited from taking the further step to become a local leader on veterans' issues. Taking on a leadership role in the homeless assistance program planning network and the wider community requires an additional investment of time and resources, but it is likely to broaden support for projects serving homeless veterans and may significantly influence the allocation of resources.



### Become a Local Activist on Homeless Veterans' Issues

In the case of ***Operation Dignity***, an activist Executive Director helps to ensure that homeless veterans' needs are adequately acknowledged and addressed. The organization initially became involved in the Continuum of Care because there was no other group representing veterans on the committee. Operation Dignity's Executive Director believes that his personal experience as a formerly homeless veteran – rather than merely a representative of homeless veterans – gives him more influence within the Continuum of Care. As a result, Operation Dignity is recognized as the leading veterans' housing group in Alameda County, CA and is “on the inside” of the Continuum of Care planning process.

***Operation Dignity's*** Executive Director attributes his success in obtaining more funding for veterans' projects to his persistent advocacy for veterans. He recommends to other veterans' groups “make sure that their voice is heard.” For example, he encourages other veterans' groups to ensure that the term “veteran services” is included in every comprehensive homeless planning document. However, he also cautions veterans' groups to be careful to support their advocacy efforts with statistics demonstrating the actual number of homeless veterans.

Although a relatively small organization in terms of staffing, client population, and services provided, ***Veterans Outreach North*** has developed a strong voice within two Continuums of Care in the Duluth area due to the consistent advocacy of its Program Manager. The Program Manager has thirty years of experience within the local provider community and is a veteran himself, which has been key in enabling the organization to obtain credibility and funding.





## Reach out to the Broader Community to Share Knowledge and Expertise on Serving the Needs of Homeless Veterans

Organizations serving veterans can play an important role in encouraging communication about the needs of homeless veterans outside formal network meetings. For example, **Joseph House** in Cincinnati has conducted a workshop for its counterpart in the city of Dayton on strategies for serving homeless veterans. The Homeless Programs Coordinator from the **Battle Creek VA** in Michigan has been actively involved in planning statewide conferences on homelessness. Through her involvement, she has made sure that experts on veterans' issues are included in panel discussions and that workshops on veterans appear on the agenda.

To encourage the inclusion of a variety of service organizations in the local competitive funding process, the **Commission on Economic Opportunity (CEO)** in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, offers technical assistance to any organization that wants to submit a project as part of the county's Continuum of Care application. CEO hires a consultant to facilitate this technical assistance. In addition, CEO sponsors an annual public meeting to which "everyone" (service organizations, consumers, and other interested parties) is invited for the purpose of gathering information about local needs and priorities.

Enhancing your organization's capacity to develop and implement programs is also important. In Appendix I of this guidebook, we have included some general resources on nonprofit management and organizational development that you may find useful.



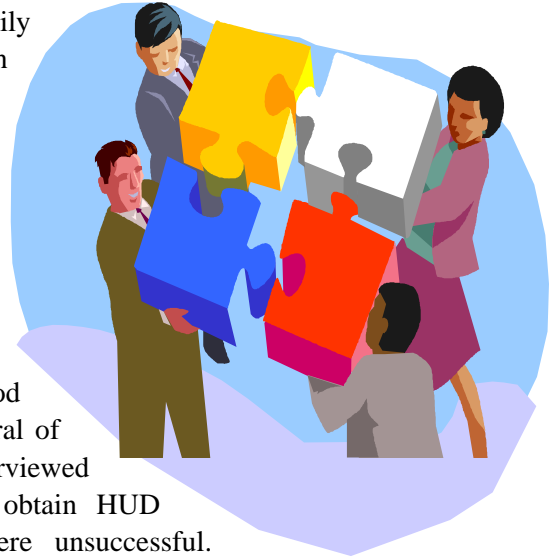


## Chapter 3

# Getting to the Table: How Four Organizations Made Local Planning Networks Work for Them

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Organizations whose clients are primarily veterans have found that getting involved in local homeless assistance networks and securing funding for projects benefiting veterans can be difficult, especially the first time around. All of the strategies discussed in this guidebook – understanding the local planning process; participating in local planning networks; developing partnerships with other agencies; becoming a leader in the community; and establishing a good reputation – take time and resources. Several of the veterans’ organizations interviewed acknowledged that their early efforts to obtain HUD funding for projects serving veterans were unsuccessful. However, consistent advocacy efforts, combined with demonstrated understanding of homeless veterans and a proven track record in serving veterans, have led to the successful funding of projects targeted to veterans.



This chapter presents profiles of four organizations serving homeless veterans that have participated in local homeless assistance program planning networks. Each of the profiles highlights one or more of the key challenges of participating in local planning networks; together, they illustrate the rich rewards that come from finding “a place at the table.”



## Ogden, Utah: Building from Small Successes

The Ogden area is home to about 4,700 homeless persons. *Utah Issues Center for Poverty Research and Action*, a local nonprofit organization that studies the effects of poverty and homelessness, leads the Balance of State Continuum of Care for the non-metropolitan areas in Utah. Although Utah Issues does not operate any housing or service programs for the homeless, the organization facilitates and coordinates the annual Continuum of Care process each year for both the Salt Lake County and Balance of State Continuums.





Although the Balance of State Continuum of Care covers 26 counties, ***Homeless Veterans Fellowship (HVF)***, based in Ogden, is the only street outreach and residential program that targets homeless veterans. The organization runs a 32-unit transitional housing facility for homeless male and female veterans and their families. It also runs a drop-in center that provides emergency services, food, clothes, and other services for approximately 670 homeless veterans. An estimated 70 percent of the organization's clients are chronically homeless. In addition to housing and emergency services, Homeless Veterans Fellowship also visits camp sites throughout the region to seek out homeless veterans, conducts regular visits to community shelters, provides community meal programs, refers clients to appropriate treatment programs, connects veterans to VA programs, offers companionship, helps find permanent housing, employment assistance, and information and helps access resources in the community that can help a homeless veteran move into a more stable living situation.

The organization was started in 1989 by six veterans who had the desire to serve homeless veterans. In the beginning, they opened a storefront drop-in center to help veterans access VA and other service providers. Later, HVF negotiated a \$1 per year lease of four HUD homes in downtown Ogden. They used these homes as transitional housing facilities and brought services to the residents. In 1997, Homeless Veterans Fellowship joined the Balance of State Continuum and applied for their first HUD grant to build 16 transitional housing units. In the next several years, they doubled their capacity and are at a point where they believe they are providing all the services necessary for veterans to achieve their goals. Funding sources include HUD, the VA's Per Diem program, United Way, the State of Utah, and a few private funders.

HVF is very involved in the Continuum of Care. Staff serve on committees and participate in homeless censuses. The organization also belongs to two local homelessness coordinating councils and is involved in the CHALENG network. HVF has also developed Memorandums of Agreement with several housing agencies that administer public housing and housing choice voucher programs, so that eligible veterans receive priority status on the agency waiting lists.

Recently, the state of Utah demonstrated its commitment to solving the problem of homelessness by creating a State Homelessness Coordination Committee that is chaired by the Lieutenant Governor. The chair of the Homeless Veterans Fellowship's Board of Directors sits on the supportive services subcommittee and works with other homeless agencies throughout Utah to better target resources for the homeless. Each year the Committee holds a two day summit where representatives from all of the state's homeless organizations meet to discuss progress, strategies, and remaining barriers to eliminating homelessness.





## Duluth, Minnesota: Getting to the Table and Staying There

Duluth is located in northeastern Minnesota and had an estimated population of 85,192 in the year 2000.<sup>4</sup> It is the largest city in St. Louis County, which has a total population of about 200,000 and an estimated homeless population of 350 to 500 persons.<sup>5</sup> The remaining six counties making up the Northeast region of Minnesota are very rural. Recent counts suggest that at any one time there are about 100 homeless individuals in overnight shelters and about 120 individuals in transitional housing living in the six-county area.<sup>6</sup> Reliable numbers are not currently available on the number of homeless individuals who are veterans.

Two Continuum of Care groups operate in the region. The ***St. Louis County Planning Department*** is the lead agency for the St. Louis County Continuum of Care, and the ***Arrowhead Regional Development Commission*** is a regional planning organization that acts as the Continuum of Care lead agency for an adjacent six-county Northeast region. These agencies help the Continuums identify service needs and funding priorities for the homeless population in their respective areas.

Based in Duluth, ***Veterans Outreach North (VON)*** is a multi-service program for homeless veterans. Started in 1998, the program serves urban, suburban, and rural clients through its outreach services and tends to operate as a “clearinghouse,” matching veterans with appropriate services and residential programs. In addition, VON operates a ten-unit scattered-site residential project and offers the following direct services: an AA group for veterans, life skills training, case management, and food assistance. The program has received funding from a variety of sources including a HUD Supportive Housing Program grant through the St. Louis County Continuum of Care. This grant, coupled with a HUD-funded Emergency Shelter Grant, funds VON’s scattered-site residential program.

VON staff report that local homeless assistance providers did not initially welcome VON’s involvement in the local Continuum of Care networks. Around 1995, several years prior to VON’s creation, the current Program Manager began working to bring attention to veterans’ needs through participation in a precursor organization to the Continuum of Care called the Low-Income Housing Consortium. He recalled that he had worked hard to counter other service providers’ reluctance to allow participation from veterans’ representatives,

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.hud.gov/local/min/duluth.html>

<sup>5</sup> Estimate provided by the local Continuum of Care coordinator for St. Louis County.

<sup>6</sup> Estimate provided by the local Continuum of Care coordinator for the Northeast Regional Continuum of Care.



because they did not want the veteran population to (in the Program Manager's words) "cut into their funding pie." They expected the Department of Veterans Affairs to take care of the veterans in the community.

As VON staff persisted in their efforts to increase attention to veterans' needs in the area, the Program Manager recalled receiving some invaluable advice from an employee of the nearby VA to "get at the table, and not leave the table" until his message was heard. Today, VON is a valued member of the region's homeless assistance network. The Continuum of Care coordinator for St. Louis County noted that VON's Program Manager is a credible and effective representative of veterans' concerns. He attends monthly meetings for each of these two Continuums of Care and currently chairs the finance subcommittee for the St. Louis County Continuum of Care. Veterans Outreach North and its staff also actively pursue cooperative partnerships with member organizations of the Continuum of Care. VON staff members are currently collaborating with the Salvation Army to create a permanent housing project.

VON's Program Manager emphasizes the importance of attending *every* Continuum of Care meeting as well as other meetings that offer networking and funding potential. Consistent networking with resource providers has meant that funding decisions can no longer ignore veterans' needs in the allocation of resources.



## Alameda County, California: Building Local Partnerships to Bring Housing and Services to Homeless Veterans

Alameda County is located on the eastern side of San Francisco Bay, encompassing the cities of Oakland and Berkeley and their surrounding suburbs. Of the county's total population of 1.4 million, an estimated 9,000 to 12,000 people are homeless on any given night. An estimated 31 percent of homeless persons are veterans.

***The Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) of Alameda County*** serves as the lead agency for the countywide Homeless Continuum of Care Council. Members of the Continuum of Care Council meet every two months and include 18 jurisdictional representatives (15 of whom are elected officials), two consumers, and representatives of advocacy organizations, faith-based groups, and housing developers.

***Operation Dignity*** is a leading homeless veterans' advocacy group and the primary provider of supportive housing for homeless veterans in Alameda



County. Operation Dignity's first project targeted to veterans began in 1994, and today the agency manages 120 units of transitional housing for single homeless adults and 95 units for families. While the agency provides services to all homeless persons, priority is given to veterans. Veterans with all types of disabilities are served, as are those discharged from prisons, treatment facilities, and hospitals for whom no subsequent residence has been identified.

The Executive Director of Operation Dignity is a member of the Executive Committee of the countywide Homeless Continuum of Care Council. The Executive Director's personal connection with – and strong commitment to – homeless veterans has given him credibility with other homeless assistance providers and has helped the organization build partnerships to expand housing and services for this population. For example, his involvement in the Continuum of Care planning process was an important factor in the decision to provide housing for veterans when the Alameda Point Naval Station closed. The Continuum of Care formed a partnership of homeless assistance providers to develop 200 units of supportive housing. Operation Dignity staff were active participants in this process, successfully advocating that 20 percent of the redeveloped units be reserved for homeless veterans.

The ***RISE project*** is another excellent example of a partnership that has led to increased services for veterans. While Operation Dignity's service area covers northern Alameda County, there was a gap in services and permanent housing for homeless people in the southern part of the county. In particular, homeless adults with disabilities, including a substantial number of homeless veterans, were underserved in this area. Established in 1998, the RISE project is a product of the Continuum of Care's recognition of this service gap. There are six partner agencies in the RISE collaborative. Although the project is not explicitly targeted to veterans, the collaborative includes the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that veterans' services are available to eligible clients. As one of the member agencies, HCD provides rental assistance through the Shelter Plus Care program, while the other agencies offer a range of integrated services to enable homeless people with disabilities to access and maintain permanent housing. These services include emergency shelter, mental health counseling, life skills training, and employment services. An outreach worker visits several drop-in centers for veterans as well as encampments of homeless people. These outreach approaches are believed to be quite successful at connecting veterans to housing and services.





## San Diego, California: Making the Most of the Continuum of Care Process

According to local estimates, there are currently about 15,000 homeless people in San Diego. Of that number, some 2,000 are veterans, about 40 percent of the county's urban single homeless men. Over 80 percent reportedly have drug and alcohol problems. Many also suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder.<sup>7</sup>

The ***Regional Task Force on the Homeless*** is the San Diego area's coordinating body for homeless assistance planning and programs. The Task Force oversees all aspects of the Continuum of Care process, from collecting annual data on homelessness to coordinating the development of the Continuum of Care application.

Since the first organized Continuum meeting was held in 1995, one local veterans' organization has participated in the process. This group, the ***Vietnam Veterans of San Diego (VVSD)*** is a non-profit organization serving homeless veterans and their families. The organization's mission is to "extend assistance to all unemployed and homeless veterans of all wars and eras and their families by providing housing, food, clothing, substance abuse recovery and mental health counseling, job training, and job placement services."

To fulfill its mission, VVSD provides both residential and non-residential services through a number of HUD-funded projects in San Diego County. The agency operates four transitional housing projects in the city and county. In addition, VVSD also provides case management services to veterans living in a transitional housing project operated by St. Vincent de Paul. All of these programs also receive matching funds from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

VVSD attributes much of its success in obtaining HUD funding to its active participation in the Continuum of Care planning process. VVSD began participating in the Continuum of Care in 1995. Initially, staff reported that becoming a part of the Continuum was difficult because the agency had no experience as a housing provider and no reputation within the supportive housing community. It took almost two years of sustained effort to become an active player. Today, a VVSD representative sits on the Continuum of Care committee that collects needs data and has served as chair of that committee. In addition, staff attend the Continuums of Care year-round meetings and help edit the Continuum of Care application.

VVSD staff believe that their involvement in the Continuum of Care has had important benefits. By being an advocate for homeless veterans' needs and

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.rtfhsd.org/>



developing successful projects, VVSD has gained the respect of other housing and service providers. As a result, VVSD has been able to partner with these providers to develop projects targeted to veterans or to obtain set-asides for veterans in other homeless assistance projects.

Involvement in the Continuum of Care process has also contributed to the growth of VVSD as an organization. The agency's size has tripled since it began participating in the Continuum of Care, in part because of the additional projects for which the agency has received HUD funding. VVSD is recognized as the leading advocate and service provider for homeless veterans within the comprehensive homeless planning process in San Diego.







## Appendix I

### Additional TA Materials for Organizations Serving Homeless Veterans

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## Additional TA Materials for Organizations Serving Homeless Veterans

Source	Website	Materials	Notes
<b>Homeless Veterans and Supportive Housing</b>			
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs	<a href="http://www.va.gov">http://www.va.gov</a>	Extensive links to VA programs and services	Includes special section on homeless veterans that includes programs and initiatives, CHALENG reports, a schedule of Stand Down events, and other information
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	<a href="http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/about/hudvet/pdf/rescoordguide.pdf">www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/about/hudvet/pdf/rescoordguide.pdf</a>	Publication entitled <i>Coordinating Resources and Developing Strategies to Meet the Needs of Homeless Veterans</i>	Highlights projects around the country that are coordinating HUD funding and other resources to address the needs of homeless veterans
Continuum of Care Training Guide (HUD)	<a href="http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/library/coc/tcocguide/index.cfm">http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/library/coc/tcocguide/index.cfm</a>	Guidance on HUD's comprehensive approach to preventing and treating homelessness.	Easy-to-understand and useful for training staff
U.S. Department of Labor	<a href="http://www.vodium.com/mediapod/dol/dlfb/">http://www.vodium.com/mediapod/dol/dlfb/</a>	Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives	Training programs on capacity building, strategic planning, corporation and foundation giving, board development, grant writing and management, and program evaluation
National Coalition for Homeless Veterans	<a href="http://www.nchv.org/service.cfm">http://www.nchv.org/service.cfm</a>	Basic links to grants, fundraising guidance, and articles on serving veterans	Helpful for organizations that are unsure of how to meet veteran-specific needs
National Coalition for Homeless Veterans	<a href="http://www.dol.gov/vets/programs/hvrp-bp.pdf">http://www.dol.gov/vets/programs/hvrp-bp.pdf</a>	Homeless veterans reintegration project best practices	Examples of successful strategies; possible networking contacts
Corporation for Supportive Housing	<a href="http://www.csh.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.viewPage&amp;pagelId=330">http://www.csh.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.viewPage&amp;pagelId=330</a>	CSH - Financing Supportive Housing Guide: includes information on capital funding sources, operating and housing funding sources, a helpful link to resources for serving special populations, and more.	Very relevant information on funding sources and needs of special populations
Technical Assistance Collaborative	<a href="http://www.tacinc.org/index/viewPage.cfm?pagelId=37">http://www.tacinc.org/index/viewPage.cfm?pagelId=37</a>	"How to be a Player in the CoC:" designed for the mental health community but has valuable information, action steps, and diagrams for all organizations trying to get involved with or new to a CoC	Step-by-step guide, goes through all major issues of joining a CoC, and identifies opportunities to have needs heard - good for veterans service providers who find veterans are not a priority in CoC
Technical Assistance Collaborative	<a href="http://www.tacinc.org/index/viewPage.cfm?pagelId=37">http://www.tacinc.org/index/viewPage.cfm?pagelId=37</a>	"Opening Doors: Permanent Housing and HUD's Continuum of Care"	Describes CoC process with special emphasis on HUD's permanent housing priorities and how they affect local providers

Source	Website	Materials	Notes
<b>Grants and Grant Management</b>			
"Grant Acquisition" from HHS Administration for Children and Families - Intermediary Development Series	<a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cf/resources/toolkit.html">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cf/resources/toolkit.html</a>	Resources for searching and applying for federal funding; guidance assessing goals and determining needs; step-by-step guide showing how to approach application, write proposal, complete budget, etc.; summary worksheet provided; appendix lists helpful websites and other resources on grant writing for nonprofits	Audience is intermediary organizations that partner/sponsor/act as grantee for smaller organizations or projects - overall easy to use, helpful information, useful lists, diagrams, examples, and glossaries
"Grant Management" from HHS Administration for Children and Families - Intermediary Development Series	<a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cf/resources/toolkit.html">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cf/resources/toolkit.html</a>	Describes roles and responsibilities of grantee and funder; step-by-step through award process; guidance on monitoring and evaluation techniques; guidance on reporting and financial management; explains details of compliance, noncompliance, termination, and closeout; appendix lists funding resources, helpful organizations for nonprofit management and helpful glossary of terms	Audience is intermediary organizations that partner/sponsor/act as grantee for smaller organizations or projects - overall easy to use, helpful information, useful lists, diagrams, examples, and glossaries
Grantmakers Locator from the Foundation Center	<a href="http://fdncenter.org/funders/grantmaker/index.html">http://fdncenter.org/funders/grantmaker/index.html</a>	Searchable directories of community foundations, grantmaking public charities, corporate grantmakers and private foundations	Easy-to-use, useful information for any nonprofit looking for potential partnerships
Common Grant Applications from the Foundation Center	<a href="http://fdncenter.org/funders/cga/index.html">http://fdncenter.org/funders/cga/index.html</a>	Lists sites where applicants can find the common grant application.	Useful tool for nonprofits that need a place to start
"Grants Writing Assistance: A Short Report" by the Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network (HHS)	<a href="http://peerta.acf.hhs.gov/taevents/basic.htm">http://peerta.acf.hhs.gov/taevents/basic.htm</a> - faith	Case study on one faith-based provider's grant writing experience.	Useful example for nonprofits inexperienced in grant writing
"Federal Funds for Organizations that Help Those in Need" from the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives	<a href="http://www.whitehouse.gov/government/fbci/catalogue.pdf">http://www.whitehouse.gov/government/fbci/catalogue.pdf</a>	A list of federal programs and agency contacts.	Useful as a reference for nonprofits seeking funds
Internet Nonprofit Center	<a href="http://www.nonprofits.org/npofaq">http://www.nonprofits.org/npofaq</a>	List of online fundraising resources for nonprofits	Internet-based information; easy to use

Source	Website	Materials	Notes
<b>Performance Management</b>			
Organizational Self-Assessment Tool from the Peter F. Drucker Foundation	<a href="http://www.pfdf.org/leaderbooks/sat/index.html">http://www.pfdf.org/leaderbooks/sat/index.html</a>	Guidance and articles for nonprofit assessment	Basic performance measurement tool for nonprofits
"Measuring Outcomes" from HHS Administration for Children and Families - Intermediary Development Series	<a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cf/resources/toolkit.html">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cf/resources/toolkit.html</a>	Creating and implementing an outcome measurement plan; answers questions about outcome measurement, how to prepare for it, what the key steps are; uses step-by-step guides	
Innovation Network	<a href="http://www.innonet.org">http://www.innonet.org</a>	Online planning and evaluation tools for nonprofits with outcome measurement in mind	Provides trainings and online, interactive evaluation; seems easy to understand and use
<b>General Capacity Building</b>			
The Foundation Center	<a href="http://www.fdncenter.org/">http://www.fdncenter.org/</a>	A clearinghouse of information on funding opportunities, conferences, trends, literature on nonprofits, virtual classroom courses on proposal writing and other training courses, chatrooms, message boards, directories of foundations and funders, worksheets, examples of grant applications, a list of upcoming conferences and events and more.	Easy to use, drop down menus, lots of useful information for any kind of nonprofit
The Urban Institute Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy	<a href="http://www.urban.org/content/PolicyCenters/NonprofitsandPhilanthropy/Overview.htm">http://www.urban.org/content/PolicyCenters/NonprofitsandPhilanthropy/Overview.htm</a>	Research and resources on nonprofit capacity building, boards and staff, administration and fundraising, and outcome measurement	Tailored to nonprofit audience; very useful information on all aspects of organizational development and resource utilization
Internet Nonprofit Center	<a href="http://www.nonprofits.org/npofaq/">http://www.nonprofits.org/npofaq/</a>	FAQ site with topics covering organization, management, resources, regulation, and development.	Easy to navigate, very useful information, easy to read format, easy to search
Bridgestar	<a href="http://www.bridgestar.org">www.bridgestar.org</a>	Resources and networking opportunities for nonprofit organizations	Website includes newsletters and other resources
Idealist.org	<a href="http://idealist.org/tools/index.html">http://idealist.org/tools/index.html</a>	Tools for nonprofits including management information, fundraising, human resources, nonprofit news, technology, diversity, staffing, and support groups.	Lots of information including websites and publications for each tool plus a list of other resources. Very easy to find and use.
Nonprofit Genie	<a href="http://www.genie.org">http://www.genie.org</a>	Features FAQs on financial management, board development, fundraising, technology, strategic planning, and volunteers	Designed for California nonprofits but most information is applicable nationwide

Source	Website	Materials	Notes
BoardSource	<a href="http://www.boardsource.org/">http://www.boardsource.org/</a>	Resources to build effective nonprofit boards; trainings, courses, online resources and publications	News, q&a, books, resources, and tools for nonprofit board development; useful for organizations with existing boards or just forming them
Alliance for Nonprofit Management	<a href="http://www.allianceonline.org/">http://www.allianceonline.org/</a>	General capacity building resources including free newsletter, conferences, technical assistance, publications and other resources	Research oriented but definitely useful for established nonprofits
The Grantsmanship Center	<a href="http://www.tgci.com/">http://www.tgci.com/</a>	Workshops, trainings, tips and publications on all details of grants	Good resources for beginning nonprofits or nonprofits just starting out with federal funds (includes link to the federal register, information to start a 501 (c)3, etc.)
About.com, Nonprofit Assistance	<a href="http://nonprofit.about.com/?once=true&amp;">http://nonprofit.about.com/?once=true&amp;</a>	Essentials of nonprofit startup, working at a nonprofit, managing a nonprofit, technology, fundraising, helpful articles, nonprofit laws, common mistakes, and nonprofit evaluation	Especially helpful for new nonprofits or less experienced veterans service provider organizations
About.com, Nonprofit Assistance	<a href="http://nonprofit.about.com/library/weekly/?once=true&amp;">http://nonprofit.about.com/library/weekly/?once=true&amp;</a>	Compilation of articles on general capacity building topics for nonprofits including board development, funding issues, community relations and leadership	Each link goes to a short (2-3 page) article with additional resources on each topic and related issues; easy-to-read and use
"Building Multiple Revenue Sources" from HHS Administration for Children and Families - Intermediary Development Series	<a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cf/resources/toolkit.html">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cf/resources/toolkit.html</a>	Includes everything from assessing capacity to encouraging small orgs to follow your lead; provides worksheets and checklists; good references in appendix; includes useful glossary	Audience is intermediary organizations that partner/sponsor/act as grantee for smaller organizations or projects - overall easy to use, helpful information, useful lists, diagrams, examples, and glossaries
Nonprofit Management Resources from the Peter F. Drucker Foundation	<a href="http://www.pfdf.org/leaderbooks/index.html">http://www.pfdf.org/leaderbooks/index.html</a>	Articles, worksheets, and links to books on nonprofit management.	Searchable site, good worksheets to use as handouts for staff training
Nonprofit Organization FAQs from the Rural Information Center	<a href="http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ricpubs/volunteerism.html">http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ricpubs/volunteerism.html</a>	Answers to questions on capacity building issues for nonprofits.	General FAQs; good for nonprofits just starting out
Capacity Building Resources from GrantCraft	<a href="http://www.grantcraft.org/catalog/guides/startups/startups_resources.html">http://www.grantcraft.org/catalog/guides/startups/startups_resources.html</a>	Information on board development, financial management, human resources, and more. Helpful list of additional resources.	Very good site; easy to use and valuable resource list
"Effective Capacity Building in Nonprofit Organizations" by McKinsey and Company for VPP	<a href="http://vpppartners.org/learning/reports/capacity/capacity.html">http://vpppartners.org/learning/reports/capacity/capacity.html</a>	Report describing strategies for nonprofits to become stronger and better serve their communities.	Free report with diagrams and printable resources

Source	Website	Materials	Notes
Free Management Library for Nonprofits and For Profits	<a href="http://www.mapnp.org/library/">http://www.mapnp.org/library/</a>	Links to articles and resources on everything from advertising to crisis management to operations.	Not a very sophisticated site but has useful information
<b>Networking</b>			
"Partnership Development" from HHS Administration for Children and Families - Intermediary Development Series	<a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cf/resources/toolkit.html">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cf/resources/toolkit.html</a>	Discusses key components of partnerships; goals of partnerships; importance of trust and capacity; explains the value of leadership; provides the advantages and disadvantages of partnerships; practical step-by-step guide to forming and managing partnerships; provides worksheets and checklists to self-assess partnership; appendix lists terms and life cycle of partnerships with helpful diagram	Audience is intermediary organizations that partner/sponsor/act as grantee for smaller organizations or projects - overall easy to use, helpful information, useful lists, diagrams, examples, and glossaries
GuideStar	<a href="http://guidestar.org/">http://guidestar.org/</a>	Searchable directory of nonprofit organizations including other useful information for nonprofits.	Good networking resource
Community Foundation Locator from the Council on Foundations	<a href="http://www.cof.org/Locator/index.cfm?menuContainerID=34&amp;crumb=2">http://www.cof.org/Locator/index.cfm?menuContainerID=34&amp;crumb=2</a>	Searchable directory of community foundations.	Good networking resource
<b>Community Development</b>			
Economic Development Reference Guide from the International Economic Development Council	<a href="http://www.iedonline.org/">http://www.iedonline.org/</a>	Links to information on a variety of urban development topics with trends and other relevant information.	Also useful for professional development of nonprofit boards
Community Development Toolbox from the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation	<a href="http://www.nw.org/network/comstrat/commEcoDev/default.asp">http://www.nw.org/network/comstrat/commEcoDev/default.asp</a>	Useful material on IDAs, neighborhood revitalization, lending compliance and more.	Useful tools for nonprofits actively engaged in their communities or seeking community support for their mission
Community-based Organizations and their local Workforce Development System Toolkit from the Department of Labor's Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives	<a href="http://www.dol.gov/cfbci/images/community.pdf">http://www.dol.gov/cfbci/images/community.pdf</a>	Toolkit to help community-based organizations understand how they can join forces with their local workforce development system in helping people find good jobs.	Addresses specific TA need but useful information for partnering and service provision





## Appendix II

# Accessing Mainstream Resources for Homeless Veterans

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Homeless veterans may have access to specialized services through the Department of Veterans Affairs, HUD, and other agencies. However, other services may also be available to them. Mainstream services such as housing, job training, health care, and food assistance are generally funded through various federal programs, such as HUD's rental assistance programs (Housing Choice Vouchers and public housing), Social Security (including SSI and SSDI), Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), the Food Stamp Program, and Medicaid. In many communities, public and private resources are also committed to funding and providing access to mainstream services. Many Federal mainstream programs are entitlement programs, with funding intended to expand or contract with changes in the existing need. In addition to aiding millions of low-income families and individuals, these programs can provide the temporary support needed for households experiencing homelessness to meet basic health and financial needs while receiving housing assistance through McKinney-Vento-funded programs.

This Appendix provides references for finding more information on mainstream programs that may be available to homeless veterans.

## Why Are Mainstream Resources Important?

Homeless persons are generally eligible for Federal assistance programs as well as many individualized local programs. Unfortunately, according to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, the effectiveness of homeless assistance providers in offering services to homeless clients has reduced the incentives for service providers from welfare, health, and other agencies to aid this hard to serve population.<sup>8</sup> Some duplication of assistance also exists between McKinney programs and mainstream programs. Linking homeless clients to existing mainstream programs can be more cost-effective than providing similar services through the homeless assistance system.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> National Alliance to End Homelessness, "A Plan not a Dream: How to End Homelessness in Ten Years".

<sup>9</sup> GAO/RCED-00-184: Homeless Face Barriers to Mainstream Programs, July 2000.



Homeless assistance providers can play an important role in making sure their homeless clients gain access to the services for which they are eligible. Mainstream service providers often do not have the incentives to do outreach to the homeless population. Because of the complexity of their needs and their transience, this population is harder to serve and often difficult to locate.<sup>10</sup> Homeless assistance providers who have the skills necessary to effectively reach out and connect with these populations can be the link between their homeless clients and mainstream service agencies. As people who are homeless transition to more stable housing, linking them to mainstream services and programs can provide the support necessary for this population to remain stably housed and reduce their risk of becoming homeless again.

## Where to Find Information on Mainstream Services

Many Federal agency websites have information on their own mainstream programs. In addition, FirstStep, an interactive tool accessible from HUD's homeless programs home page at <http://www.hud.gov/homeless/index.cfm> provides extensive information on mainstream services including Department of Veterans Affairs health care and compensation programs, TANF, Food Stamps, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and One-Stop Career Centers. As its name implies, FirstStep is a valuable source of initial information on services available, eligibility requirements, and enrollment information. Designed primarily for use by case managers and others who work directly with homeless clients, you will also find links to additional information, required paperwork, and advice on how to apply. The following pages provide a summary of the information available through FirstStep.

Other resources on mainstream services available to homeless veterans include:

For more in-depth information on health care services and benefits available to veterans through the Department of Veterans Affairs, see the VA's website at <http://www.va.gov>. In addition to information about the VA's homeless veterans programs, you will also find information on other services such as vocational assistance and readjustment counseling, plus a facility locator, enrollment forms, and other information. The Veterans Benefit Administration has its own website at <http://www.vba.va.gov> where you will find information on benefits and services as well as downloadable forms and email links to ask questions or request additional information.

For general information (not targeted specifically to veterans), the Corporation for Supportive Housing website ([www.csh.org](http://www.csh.org)) includes links to a variety of

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

materials on financing housing and services, including brief background information on mainstream programs such as Medicaid and TANF as well as specialized programs such as the Ryan White CARE Act programs for persons with AIDS and the Transitional Program for Older Homeless Youth.



The following pages are reproduced from the on-line version of FirstStep to show the types of information available. The full FirstStep tool can be accessed from:

<http://www.hud.gov/homeless/index.cfm>

## How to Use FirstStep

To learn more about the information featured on FirstStep and how you can use it, click on one of the questions below or scroll down.

- [What is \*FirstStep\*?](#)
- [How can \*FirstStep\* help case managers and outreach workers?](#)
- [What are “mainstream resources?”](#)
- [Why is accessing mainstream resources important?](#)
- [What are the benefits and limits of \*FirstStep\*?](#)
- [How is \*FirstStep\* organized?](#)
- [What computer software is needed to use \*FirstStep\*?](#)

### >What is *FirstStep*?

*FirstStep* is an easy-to-use, interactive tool for case managers, outreach workers, and others working with people who are homeless. The information on this CD-ROM will help you assist your clients to access benefits from Federal mainstream benefit programs.

*FirstStep* offers advice on how to be a good benefits counselor as well as helpful, timesaving tips from others who work with people who are homeless. In addition, it includes [Tools and Resources](#) you can use to keep all of the benefits information in one place or learn about other programs and organizations that may benefit your client but are not included on this CD-ROM.

### >How can *FirstStep* help case managers and outreach workers?

As a case manager or outreach worker, *FirstStep* will help you:

Understand “mainstream resources”  
Identify the major mainstream benefit programs for which  
your clients are eligible  
Help ensure your clients receive benefits they are entitled to

**>What are “mainstream resources”?**

"Mainstream resources" is a term used to describe a variety of Federal and state benefit government assistance programs your clients may be eligible to receive.

"Mainstream resources" are not targeted to assist individuals who are homeless. Rather, persons who are homeless must qualify for assistance based on their disability and/or economic status.

Together, mainstream (non-targeted) service resources or benefit programs account for billions of dollars in Federal and state funds available nationally to provide low-income persons, including individuals and families who are homeless, with cash payments and supportive services for needs such as housing, health care, job training, and food and nutrition services.

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**>Why is accessing mainstream resources important?**

For a variety of reasons, many people who are homeless are not accessing the mainstream services to which they are entitled. Only a fraction of homeless individuals and families access mainstream benefit programs such as: Supplemental Security Income (SSI); Social Security Disability Income (SSDI); Veteran's Benefits; Medicaid; and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

Addressing the various housing and supportive service needs of persons who are homeless nationwide requires significant resources. Congress appropriates several hundred billion dollars each year for mainstream assistance programs. Nearly half of HUD's competitive homeless assistance funds are used to provide supportive services, as opposed to housing. When providers assist homeless persons in identifying and successfully accessing mainstream assistance programs, the need to use HUD's homeless



assistance funds to provide supportive services will decline, allowing those funds to be increasingly used to develop more needed housing. Accessing mainstream resources can lead to the ability to house more people who are homeless, as well as provide them with the supportive services they need - a "win-win" proposition.

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### > **What are the benefits and limitations of *FirstStep*?**

*FirstStep* focuses on the following major mainstream benefit programs:

[Food Stamps](#)

[Medicaid](#)

[Medicare](#)

[One-Stop Career Center System](#)

[Social Security](#)

[Social Security Disability Insurance \(SSDI\)](#)

[State Children's Health Insurance Program \(SCHIP\)](#)

[Supplemental Security Income \(SSI\)](#)

[Temporary Assistance for Needy Families \(TANF\)](#)

[Veterans Affairs Health Care \(VA\)](#)

[Veterans Affairs Compensation \(VA\)](#)

Within each benefit program, there is information offered regarding benefits your client may receive, eligibility requirements, the application process, what benefits your client may receive if he/she is an immigrant, as well as contact information and, in some cases, training materials.

There are additional programs that may benefit your clients who are homeless that are not included in *FirstStep*. Where available, we have provided a link to these programs in the [Resources](#) section of *FirstStep*. Some of these programs include:

Community Development Block Grant

Community Mental Health Services Block Grant

Community Service Block Grant

HOME Investment Partnership





Housing Choice Vouchers  
Social Services Block Grant  
Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant  
Welfare-to-Work  
Workforce Investment

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### > **How is FirstStep organized?**

FirstStep is organized in five categories based on your clients' basic needs:

#### > [Food Assistance](#)

Food Stamps

#### > [Income Assistance](#)

Social Security  
Social Security Disability Insurance [SSDI]  
Supplemental Security Income [SSI]  
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [TANF]  
Veterans Affairs Compensation (VA)

#### > [Health Care Assistance](#)

Medicare  
Medicaid  
State Children's Health Insurance Program [SCHIP]  
Veterans Affairs Health Care (VA)

#### > [Employment Assistance](#)

One-Stop Career Center System



> [Housing Assistance](#)

*FirstStep* matches mainstream benefit programs to each of these need-areas. Within each need-area, you will receive:

- Information about eligibility

- Advice and steps about applying for the benefits

- Detailed information, including links to the mainstream benefit programs

In addition, *FirstStep* features a [Client Benefit Worksheet](#) you can use to keep all of your clients' benefits information and appointments in one place and a [Contact Sheet](#) to keep all of your state and local program representatives contacts in one place. Both of these can be found in *FirstStep's* [Tools & Resources](#) section.



## Appendix III

### Organizations and Projects Contacted

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#### Arizona

##### **U.S. Vets**

Phoenix, AZ

Contact: Tony Johnson, Director of Programs  
602-305-8585

#### California

##### **Alameda County Housing and Community Development Department**

Oakland, CA

Contact: Kristen Lee, Alameda County Continuum of Care Coordinator  
510-670-5944

##### **Operation Dignity**

Oakland, CA

Contact: Alex McElree, Executive Director  
510-287-8465

##### **The RISE Project**

Contact: Hazel Weiss, RISE Coordinator  
510-670-5941

##### **Swords to Plowshares**

Contact: Michael Blecker

[www.swords-to-plowshares.org](http://www.swords-to-plowshares.org)

##### **California Council of Veterans Affairs**

Los Angeles, CA

Contact: Margaret Bush-Ware, Director of Development and Programs  
323-937-9888

##### **Vietnam Veterans of San Diego**

San Diego, CA

Contact: David Siegler, CFO and Vice President  
619-497-6123 ext. 277



**Department of Community and Economic Development, Community Services Division**

San Diego, CA

Contact: Sharon Johnson, Administrator for Homeless Services Program for the City of San Diego  
619-533-6525

**San Diego County Housing and Community Development Department**

San Diego, CA

Contact: Peggy Goldstein,  
858-694-8740

**Florida**

**VETSPACE**

Gainesville, FL

Contact: Robert Murphy, Grants Manager  
352-955-2245

**Alachua County Coalition for Homeless and Hungry**

Gainesville, FL

Contact: Jim Hencin, Block Grant Administrator for the City of Gainesville  
352-334-5031

**Volunteers of America VA Transitional Program**

Miami, FL

Contact: Mercy Pargas, Financial Director and Ester Valladeros, Clinical Coordinator  
813-287-8651 x 231 or 305-644-0335

**Louisiana**

**Acadiana Outreach Center**

Lafayette, LA

Contact: Missy Franks, Toni Dupieu  
337-237-7618 x 217

**Massachusetts**

**Massachusetts Veterans Opportunity Council**

Gardner, Massachusetts

Contact: David Parmenter  
978-632-9601



## Michigan

### **Veterans Comprehensive Assistance Program**

Grand Rapids, MI

Contact: Dick MacDonald, Director

616-234-0220

### **Battle Creek VA**

Battle Creek, MI

Contact: Mariam Bearsdley-Gibbs

616-966-5600 ext. 5636

### **The Salvation Army**

Grand Rapids, MI

Contact: Maurie Weitekamp, Housing Continuum of Care Coordinator

616-459-0042

[mweitekamp@usc.salvationarmy.org](mailto:mweitekamp@usc.salvationarmy.org)

### **Detroit Rescue Mission Ministries**

Detroit, MI

Contact: Dr. Chad Audi

## Minnesota

### **Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans**

Veterans Outreach North

Duluth, Minnesota

Contact: Durban Keeney, Program Manager

218-722-8763

<http://www.citilink.com>

### **Minnesota Assistance**

Statewide Minnesota

Contact: Kathy Vitalis, COO

612-726-6296

### **Arrowhead Regional Development Commission**

Duluth, Minnesota

Contact: Patty Beech, Northeast Region CoC contact person

218-722-5545

<http://www.ardc.org/>



**St. Louis County Planning Department**

St. Louis County, Minnesota

Contact: Lisa Potswald, St. Louis County CoC contact person  
218-726-5009

**Missouri****VA Healthcare for Homeless Veterans**

Columbia VA Hospital

Columbia, MO

Contact: Jennifer Templeton, Coordinator  
573-814-6000 x6495

**New Hampshire****Liberty House Shelter, Inc.**

Manchester, NH

Contact: Donald Duhamel, Director  
603-669-0761

**New Jersey****Positive Health Care**

Newark, NJ

Contact: Joan Rodney, Case Manager Supervisor and  
Tami Christian, Vice President  
973-596-9667

**The Salt and Light Housing Development Management Company**

Statewide New Jersey

Contact: Kent Pipes  
609-661-2147

**New York****Albany Housing Coalition, Inc.**

Albany, NY

Contact: Dave Schachne, Grant Writing and Development and  
Joe Sluska, Executive Director  
518-465-5251



## Ohio

### **Joseph House, Inc.**

Cincinnati, OH

Contact: Bill Malone, Executive Director

513-241-2965

### **Partnership Center**

Cincinnati, OH

Contact: Michelle Budzek, Facilitator of the Cincinnati Continuum of Care

513-891-4016

[mbudzek@fuse.net](mailto:mbudzek@fuse.net)

## Oregon

### **Sam Galbreath and Associates, Inc.**

Portland, OR

Contact: Sam Galbreath

503-244-3435

## Pennsylvania

### **Butler County Veterans Administration**

Transitional Housing Project

Butler County, Pennsylvania

Contact: Sandy Beahm, Coordinator of Homeless and Outreach Services

724-285-2514

### **Commission on Economic Opportunity**

VA Transitional Housing Project

Luzerne County, Pennsylvania

Contact: Noel Duffy, Executive Director

570-829-1665

### **Diana T. Meyers & Associates**

Consultant for Butler County and Luzerne County, PA CoC

Contact: Diana T. Meyers

215-576-7970



**Catholic Social Services of Lackawanna County**

St. James Manor, Veterans SRO, VA Alcohol Drug Treatment Program, Chronic Mentally Ill

Scranton, Pennsylvania

Contact: Steve Nocilla, Executive Director  
570-207-2287

**University of Scranton, Nonprofit Resource Center (NRC)**

Consultant for Lackawanna County, PA CoC

Scranton, Pennsylvania

Contact: Barbara Parkman, Coordinator of NRC  
570-941-4050

Tennessee

**Alpha Omega Veterans Services, Inc.**

Contact: Cordell Walker, Executive Director  
901-726-5066

Texas

**Opportunity Center for the Homeless**

El Paso, TX

Contact: Raymond Tullius, Executive Director  
915-577-0357

**American GI Forum National Veterans Outreach Program**

San Antonio, Texas

Contact: Mac Rattan, Vice President  
210-223-4088

<http://www.va.gov/vso/agif.htm>

Utah

**Homeless Veterans Fellowship**

Ogden, UT

Contact: John Vickroy, Chair of the Board of Directors  
801-321-7133





## Washington

### **Compass Center**

Seattle, WA

Contact: Janice Hougen, Program Manager

206-461-7835

[jhougen@compasscenter.org](mailto:jhougen@compasscenter.org)

### **King County Department of Community and Human Services, Housing and Development Department, Community Services Division**

Seattle, WA

Contact: Cynthia Ricks-MacOtaan, Homeless Planner

206-296-8644

### **City of Seattle, Department of Health and Human Services**

Seattle, WA

Contact: Eileen Denham

206-684-0915

### **Seattle Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program**

Lake Forest, WA

Contact: Sherwood Dickie

206-467-0714

### **Pierce County Veterans Bureau**

Tacoma, WA

Contact: Mark Mascho

253-798-7439

### **Pierce County Department of Community Services and Resource Development**

Tacoma, WA

Contact: Ely Ottey, Continuum of Care Coordinator

253-798-7381

### **Bellingham Veterans Center**

Bellingham, WA

Contact: Mike Novotny

360-733-9226





## Appendix IV

### Local HUD Field Office Contacts

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This appendix provides a listing of local contacts for HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD), which administers HUD's McKinney-Vento homeless assistance funds. The contacts are listed by region, then by HUD local office. Updated contact information can also be found on the HUD website at: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/about/local/index.cfm>.

#### New England

##### **Connecticut State Office**

One Corporate Center, 19<sup>th</sup> Floor, Hartford, CT 06103-3220  
CPD Director: Mary Ellen Morgan, 860-240-4800

##### **New Hampshire State Office**

275 Chestnut Street, Manchester, NH 03101-2487  
Program Manager: Richard Hatin, 603-666-7510

##### **Massachusetts State Office**

10 Causeway Street, Room 375, Boston, MA 02222-1092  
CPD Director: Robert Paquin 617-994-8357

#### New York/New Jersey

##### **Buffalo Area Office**

465 Main Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Buffalo, NY 14203-1780  
CPD Director: Nancy A. Peacock (Acting), 716-551-5755

##### **New York State Office**

26 Federal Plaza, Suite 3504, New York, NY 10278-0068  
CPD Director: Robert Cardillo, 212-542-7401

##### **New Jersey State Office**

One Newark Center, 13th Floor, Newark, NJ 07102-5260  
CPD Director: Kathleen Naymola, 973-622-7900, ext. 330



## Mid-Atlantic

### **Maryland State Office**

10 South Howard Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Baltimore, MD 21201-2505  
CPD Director: Joseph O'Connor, 410-962-2520

### **Pennsylvania State Office**

Wanamaker Bldg., 100 Penn Square East, Philadelphia, PA 19107-3380  
CPD Director: Nadab Bynum, 215-656-0626, ext. 3201

### **Pittsburgh State Office**

339 Sixth Avenue, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Pittsburgh, PA 15222-2515  
CPD Director: Lynn Daniels, 412-644-2999

### **Virginia State Office**

600 East Broad Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Richmond, VA 23219-4320  
CPD Director: Ronnie J. Legette, 804-771-2100, ext. 3766

### **District of Columbia Office**

820 First Street, N.E., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4205  
CPD Director: Frances Bush (Acting), 202-275-9200

## Southeast/Caribbean

### **Alabama State Office**

950 22<sup>nd</sup> Street N. Suite 900, Birmingham, AL 35203-5301  
CPD Director: Harold Cole, 205-731-2630, ext. 1027

### **Caribbean State Office**

171 Carlos E. Chardon Avenue, San Juan, PR 00918-0903  
CPD Director: Jose R. Rivera, 787-766-55201, Toll free – 888-254-5436

### **Florida State Office**

909 Southeast 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Miami, FLA 33131  
CPD Director: Maria Ortiz, 305-536-4431, ext. 2223

### **Georgia State Office**

40 Marietta Street, Five Points Plaza, Atlanta, GA 30303-2806  
CPD Director: John Perry, 404-331-5001, ext. 2449

### **Jacksonville Area Office**

Charles Bennett Federal Bldg, 400 West Bay Street, Suite 1015  
Jacksonville, FLA 32202-5121  
CPD Director: Gary Causey, 904-232-1777, ext. 2077



**Kentucky State Office**

601 West Broadway, P.O. Box 1044, Louisville, KY 40202-1044  
CPD Director: Virginia Peck, 502-582-6163, ext. 200

**Mississippi State Office**

100 West Capitol Street, Room 904, Jackson, MS 39269-1096  
CPD Director: Emily Eberhardt, 601-965-4700, ext. 3140

**North Carolina State Office**

1500 Pinecroft Road, Greensboro, NC 27407-3707  
CPD Director: Gary Dimmick, 336-547-4000, ext. 2047

**South Carolina State Office**

S. Thurmond Federal Bldg., 1835 Assembly Street, Columbia, SC 29201-2480  
CPD Director: Louis E. Bradley, 803-765-5564

**Tennessee State Office**

John J. Duncan Federal Bldg., 710 Locust Street SW, Knoxville, TN 37902-2526  
CPD Director: Mary C. Wilson, 865-545-4391, ext. 125

**Midwest****Illinois State Office**

77 West Jackson Boulevard, Chicago, IL 60604-3507  
CPD Director: Ray Willis, 312-353-6236, ext. 2713

**Indiana State Office**

151 North Delaware Street, Suite 1200, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2526  
CPD Director: Robert Poffenberger, 317-226-6303

**Michigan State Office**

Patrick V. McNamara Bldg., 477 Michigan Ave., Detroit, MI 48226-2592  
CPD Director: Jeanette Harris, 313-226-7900, ext. 8059

**Minnesota State Office**

920 Second Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55401-2195  
CPD Director: Alan Joles, 617-370-3019, ext. 2107

**Ohio State Office**

200 North High Street, Columbus, OH 43215-2463  
CPD Director: Lana Vacha, 614-469-5737, ext. 8240



**Wisconsin State Office**

310 West Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 1380, Milwaukee, WI 53203-2289  
CPD Director: Robert Berlan, 414-297-3214, ext. 8100

**Southwest****Arkansas State Office**

425 West Capitol Avenue, Suite 900, Little Rock, AR 72201-3488  
CPD Director: James Slater, 501-324-6375, ext. 3300

**Louisiana State Office**

Hale Boggs Federal Bldg, 500 Poydras Street, New Orleans, LA 70130-3099  
CPD Director: Greg Hamilton, 504-589-7212, ext. 1047

**New Mexico State Office**

625 Silver Avenue, SW, Suite 100, Albuquerque, NM 87110-6472  
CPD Director: Frank Padilla, 505-346-7361

**Oklahoma State Office**

301 NW 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 200, Oklahoma City, OK, 73102-2233  
CPD Director: David H. Long, 405-609-8569

**San Antonio State Office**

One Alamo Center, 106 S. Saint Mary's St., San Antonio, TX 78205  
CPD Director: John T. Maldonado, 210-475-6821

**Texas State Office**

801 Cherry Street, P.O. Box 2905, Ft. Worth, TX 76113-2905  
CPD Director: Katie Worsham, 817-978-5934

**Great Plains****Kansas State Office**

400 State Avenue, Room 200, Kansas City, KS 66101-2406  
CPD Director: William Rotert, 913-551-5485

**Nebraska State Office**

10909 Mill Valley Road, Suite 100, Omaha, NE 68154-3955  
CPD Director: Pat McCauley, 402-492-3147

**St. Louis Area Office**

1222 Spruce Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Suite 3100, St. Louis, MO 63103-2836  
CPD Director: Dee Ann Ducote, 314-539-6524



## Rocky Mountain

### **Colorado State Office**

1670 Broadway, Denver, CO 80202-4801

CPD Director: Guadalupe M. Herrera, 303-672-5414, ext. 1326

## Pacific/Hawaii

### **Hawaii State Office**

500 Ala Moana Boulevard, Suite 3A, Honolulu, HI 96813-4918

CPD Director: Mark Chandler, 808-522-8180, ext. 264

### **Los Angeles Area Office**

611 West Sixth Street, Suite 800, Los Angeles, CA 90017-3801

CPD Director: William Vasquez, 213-894-8000, ext. 3300.

### **Phoenix Area Office**

400 North 5th Street, Suite 1600, Phoenix, AZ 85004-2361

CPD Director: Martin H. Mitchell, 602-379-4754

### **San Francisco Area Office**

600 Harrison Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, San Francisco, CA 94107-1300

CPD Director: Steve Sachs, 415-489-6597

## Northwest/Alaska

### **Alaska State Office**

3000 C Street, Suite 401, Anchorage, AK 99503

CPD Director: Gus Smith, 907-677-9890

### **Oregon State Office**

400 Southwest Sixth Avenue, Suite 700, Portland, OR 97204-1632

CPD Director: Douglas Carlson, 503-326-7018

### **Washington State Office**

909 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Suite 200, Seattle, WA 98104-1000

CPD Director: Jack Peters (Regional Office Director), 206-220-5150

